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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/719,338	01/17/2001	James Westphal	1313/1E290-US2	7143

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Darby & Darby
805 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10022-7513

EXAMINER

WEBB, JAMISUE A

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3761

DATE MAILED: 03/28/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/719,338

Applicant(s)

WESTPHAL ET AL.

Examiner

Jamisue A. Webb

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-9 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-9 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 17 January 2001 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 5.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

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DETAILED ACTION

Drawings

1. The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) because they include the following reference sign(s) not mentioned in the description: Reference numeral 16. A proposed drawing correction, corrected drawings, or amendment to the specification to add the reference sign(s) in the description, are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Specification

2. This application does not contain an abstract of the disclosure as required by 37 CFR 1.72(b). An abstract on a separate sheet is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

3. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

4. Claims 1-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

5. Claim 1 recites the limitation "the other surface" in line 4. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

6. With respect to Claim 1: the phrase SAP is unclear. SAP is an acronym, and the claim has not previously described what the acronym stands for. The examiner assumes this is superabsorbent, and if so, the applicant suggest writing out the full words for SAP.

7. Claim 1 recites the limitation "the outer edges" in line 9. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

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8. Claim 1 recites the limitation "the fibers" in line 10. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.
9. Claim 1 recites the limitation "the distribution zone surface" in line 11. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.
10. With respect to Claim 4: the phrase "is sealed to at least one lateral edge of said structure" is unclear. Does this mean that the it is sealed from some place (i.e. the center of the structure) to the lateral edge of the structure, if so where does the seal start? Or Does this mean that it is sealed onto at least one lateral edge? If this is so, the containment layer is part of the absorbent structure and is the outermost layer, therefore how can the containment layer be sealed to itself?
11. Claim 5 recites the limitation "the distribution zone surface" in lines 2 and 3. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.
12. Claim 9 recites the limitation "airfelt layer" in lines 1 and 2. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

13. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

The changes made to 35 U.S.C. 102(e) by the American Inventors Protection Act of 1999

(AIPA) do not apply to the examination of this application as the application being examined was not

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(1) filed on or after November 29, 2000, or (2) voluntarily published under 35 U.S.C. 122(b).

Therefore, this application is examined under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) prior to the amendment by the AIPA (pre-AIPA 35 U.S.C. 102(e)).

14. Claims 1. and 2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Widlund et al. (5,814,034).

15. With respect to Claim 1: Widlund et al. discloses the use of an absorbent structure (see Figure 10), with an upper liquid acquisition layer (14), liquid distribution layer (15) and a liquid storage layer (16), where the liquid storage layer includes superabsorbent particles (column 9, lines 46-53). Widlund also discloses the use of a containment layer that holds the storage layer against the distribution layer (See Figure 10).

16. With respect to Claim 2: Widlund discloses the absorbent body being made of non-woven material and the distribution layer containing a small amount of superabsorbent (more than the acquisition layer), therefore having a higher density than that acquisition layer, so the wicking/distribution layer can draw the fluid from the acquisition layer (see column 9, lines 19-60).

17. Claims 1, and 3-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Reising et al. (4,988,344).

18. With respect to Claim 1: Reising discloses the use of an absorbent article (20) with the use of an upper fibrous layer which has an acquisition layer (48), and a distribution layer (50), and a lower storage layer (52) that comprises superabsorbent particle (see abstract), and a containment layer (60) that holds the storage layer against the distribution layer (see Figure 3).

19. With respect to Claim 3: See Column 17, line 63 to Column 18, line 8.

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20. With respect to Claim 4-6: The containment layer is wrapped around the storage layer and sealed to the distribution layer (column 19, lines 49-55).
21. With respect to Claim 7: Reising discloses the batt being wrapped in a web of material such as a tissue (column 8, lines 25-26).
22. With respect to Claim 8: Claim 8 is rejected as being drawn to an unselected species of the Markush group in Claim 7.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

23. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

24. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).
25. Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Reising in view of Dragoo et al. (5,460,622).

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26. Reising, as disclosed above for claims 1 and 3, fails to disclose the airfelt material being lightly bonded. Dragoo discloses the use of a storage layer (32) that is bonded (see Figure 3, and column 17, lines 57-62). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have the storage core of Reising, be slightly bonded, as disclosed by Dragoo, in order to add integrity to the storage core. (see Dragoo, column 17).

Conclusion

27. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Serbiak et al. (5,248,309), Ness (4,842,594) and Fourness (2,464,640) disclose the use of multiple layered absorbent structures.

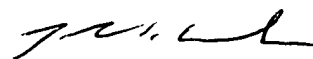
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jamisue A. Webb whose telephone number is (703) 308-8579. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (7:30 - 4:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John G. Weiss can be reached on (703) 308-2702. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 872-9302 for regular communications and (703) 872-9303 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-1148.

jaw

March 21, 2002



John G. Weiss
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Group 3700